

M-G-M's "Broadway Melody of 1936" Opens to Crowded Houses, Loew's, Toronto

CANADIAN MOVING PICTURE DIGEST

Vol. 27, No. 26

TORONTO 2, CANADA

Oct. 19th, 1935

"I have just seen the
Marx Brothers picture,
'A NIGHT AT THE
OPERA' and believe
me boys it's the funniest
film ever made. I haven't
stopped laughing yet!"



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RAY LEWIS

Editor and Managing Director

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METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER BIG DEAL



LONDON press headlines a £50,000 Film-Opera Deal recently consummated by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, giving Leo, the Lion, the film rights of an extensive repertoire of

most famous Italian operas. In fact it looks as if Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have acquired nearly the whole of these Italian Operas.

The negotiations have been carried on for some time, but with unusual secrecy for this Industry of ours, for no one ever heard a whisper of the proceedings. The rights to the operas cost M-G-M approximately two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The production of "The Tales of Hoffman" announced by this company, will have a cast which will include, Miss Grace Moore, Miss Jeannette Macdonald, Miss Marion Talley, and Mr. Nelson Eddy whose delightful voice was heard to such advantage with Jeanette Macdonald in "Naughty Marietta".

The Film world has arrived at a stage where it realizes, through the concrete proof of successful operettas upon the screen, that such form of entertainment is what the picture-going public desire in pictures which are not dramas.

The Digest editorial, quite seven years ago, when Talking Pictures were first produced, prophesied that we would have Opera successfully upon the Screen; and advised producers to secure film rights for such Operas. For those who have their Digests on file, it would be of interest to look for The Digest editorial on this subject. Many other prophecies of The Digest have come true and are coming true.

Also, the Film Trade in Canada and the United States will remember what The Digest had to say about British Pictures and the future of a British Film Industry, the cooperation of British and American Film Interests.

Again The Digest advises that the jealousy between British Film Enterprise and American Film Enterprise will do neither of these respective Enterprises any good. No good protesting, "there is no jealousy". There certainly is. A grave and very serious mistake. The cooperation of British Film Enterprise and American Film Enterprise is what the screens of the world need for the production of better pictures; and for the peace of the world.

British Producers need the benefit of the experience and technical perfection of the American Film Industry; and the American Film Industry is in need of what the British Producer can furnish, the English-speaking voice, new backgrounds, new vision, a freshness of outlook, a less machine-like hide-bound producing activity; and a number of people in executive and important producing departments who have the nerve to say, "No" when executives say, "Yes".

Also of slight importance, the British have available millions and millions of dollars for Film Enterprise.



ROYAL



RAY LEWIS

PRESENTS

NOEL COWARD, who added recently to his fame with "The Scoundrel", that most unusual screen picture, is to blaze a new trail with his next theatrical offspring. "To-night At Eight", which is to be presented by John S. Wilcox at the Manchester Opera House, England, this month.

It will consist of nine plays, three of which will be performed on different nights. Each performance will present one serious play, one comedy, one musical production. The plays will vary in length, ranging from one to seven scenes.

Noel Coward has written all the dialogue and the music. He and Gertrude Lawrence will co-star.

His idea is to give the players an opportunity for a variety of characterizations. He is the first playwright who has ever attempted to write nine playlets, covering an entire season of repertoire, all at once. But then there is a wizardry about Noel Coward, he reels off plays, remarkably successful ones, just as Edgar Wallace reeled off thrillers.

RAMON NOVARRO attended the premiere showing of "Peg of Old Drury", a Herbert Wilcox production, in which Anna Neagle and Sir Cedric Hardwicke are the stars. Novarro was mobbed by about two thousand women, who broke through the cordon of police as his car drove up to the Leicester Square theatre.

This is the second mobbing that Novarro has received while the London press play up "The Secret of Novarro's Allure".

When interviewed, Novarro said, "What they (meaning the public) see in me may be something which they imagine, but I think they perceive, or imagine they perceive, something spiritual in my character. Valentino's following was based on sex, mine—not at all. They like me because I have been good to my family, because scandal has never touched my name. They have made me into a symbol of a particular kind of goodness".

I am not fooling, if you get the Daily Mail, London, of Saturday, August 24th, you will read just what I have written. Such sweet, pure publicity.

Novarro is to appear in a romantic musical play, "Royal Exchange", it is to be produced, according to this same interview, by, "Mr. Joe L. Sacks, the Polish-Jewish-American producer, who admits he can neither read nor write but can recognize figures when he sees them".

The article does not say whether these figures are dates of the month, figures connected with the dollar mark, or in Mae West's classifications.

Talking of Mae West, a story appeared in

the London press, that she had been offered thirty-five thousand to appear at the Piccadilly Theatre for two weeks.

THE Piccadilly was recently purchased by Alfred Esdaille, managing director of the Prince of Wales Theatre, the price more than a half of a million dollars. Mr. Esdaille states he has purchased the theatre to provide the West End with a first-class Variety show. It will operate on the three shows a day plan, matinee and two shows nightly. Mae West stated that she could not come even at that figure; although at any figure, she is a figure.

The first talking picture ever to be shown in England, namely Warner Brothers "Singing Fool", with Al Jolson, was shown at this theatre. The first show to be produced was "Blue Eyes" a musical play starring Evelyn Laye. The theatre cost one million to build in 1928.

By the way Evelyn Laye is said to have given up her screen career, as has also Diana Wynyard. Diana's reason is that she photographs badly. Remembering Miss Wynyard in that never-to-be-forgotten performance in "Cavalcade", one remembers her all through that picture, from youth, to that of an elderly woman, outstandingly beautiful. However, Diana has another excuse, that she is too self-conscious of how she is photographing to do her best work, and that for screen work she has to relearn all that she learned upon the stage.

REMEMBER George Arliss being directed in his first picture by James Young. He too was obliged to learn the art of screen acting. How well he has succeeded. Wait until you see his next four G-B. Miss Diana Wynyard is now appearing in London, in a stage play, "Sweet Aloes", with great success. She confesses that her success is perhaps responsible for her decision to give up a screen career.

However, for those we lose, we make new gains. Charles B. Cochran joins Mr. Joseph Schenck and Mr. Czinner, husband of Elizabeth Bergner in the formation of a producing company in which Elizabeth Bergner will be the star. The first picture will be Bergner in "Saint Joan".

Sir Thomas Beecham made his first appearance in film-work when he conducted his own orchestra and singers at the studios of the Associated Talking Pictures, Limited, Ealing, for the musical recordings in "Whom the Gods Love", a story based on the life of Mozart.

Mr. Ernest Irving, musical director of the company, states that, "Thirty Mozart excerpts will be used in the film, including his operas

(Continued on page 5)

Don't Miss Annual Motion Picture Ball, Royal York, November 8th

Dear Old London

(Special to The Digest from our London correspondent, Dennison Thornton)

"WITHIN a year every big producer in Hollywood will be making films in England. Not because they like the way we part our hair, but because it will be essential for them to do so."

Thus Alexander Korda in a statement to the press on arriving back here from his recent Hollywood trip. Giving reasons for this utterance the London Films chief pointed out that some forty-five cents of every dollar made by Hollywood is being taken out of the British market. One American company, he said, had made its entire profits out of the British Isles last year.

"Of course they think I'm crazy when I tell them all this. But I know I'm right".

It is interesting to recall that when Korda left Hollywood some years ago after producing there the extremely witty "Private Life of Helen of Troy", nobody tried to prevent him leaving. Producers didn't want him.

His recent visit to Hollywood was a very different tale. They wanted him so badly they offered him every conceivable inducement to remain and make pictures there. They elevated him to position of producer-member of United Artists, an honor never previously conferred upon a producer outside the U.S.A.

According to the man himself his chief reason for wanting to join the U.A. circle was not so much for the exceptional world distribution facilities the "tie-up" would afford him, but rather for the sake of the directorial talent it would place at his disposal.

It is of significance to note that the only star Korda signed up in Hollywood was Marlene Dietrich. Among the directors he placed under contract were King Vidor, William K. Howard, Harry D'Arrast, Edmund Goulding and Frank Lloyd.

"I want to get the big directors — they'll get me the stars I want", he explained.

Frank Lloyd, it seems, is to form his own production unit over here in conjunction with London Films. Edmund Goulding's first assignment will be a Merle Oberon picture.

Korda further revealed the possibility of Charlie Chaplin coming over shortly. The comedian, he said, had expressed a strong desire to make a picture for London Films.

During the 1935-36 season the Korda organization will produce 20 super-pictures for which a budget of 10,000,000 dollars has been appropriated. The first two films in this group will be "Cyrano de Bergerac" starring Charles Laughton, and "Lawrence of Arabia". Before his death Lawrence gave Korda sole rights to his "Revolt in the Desert". The picture will be directed by Zoltan Korda who made the highly successful "Sanders of the River".

"China Seas" Makes Big Hit in England

That Londoners have fallen in a big way for M-G-M's "China Seas" is clearly evidenced by the fact that the picture has been held over a third week at the Empire, Leicester Square. The "Sunday Express" told us "not to miss it for all the tea in China". We didn't. Other dailies were equally enthusiastic in their praise. Gable, Harlow and Berry, they said, had never done better work.

Incidentally, Edgar Selwyn, M-G-M director of the new Crawford opus, "Elegance", shares Charles Laughton's opinion that Clark Gable is one of the greatest

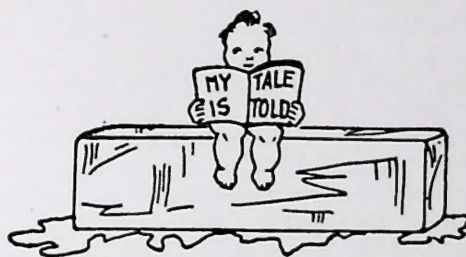
Ray Presents

(Continued from page 4)

and serenades". Sir Thomas had said to an interviewer, during a lull in the music, "My one regret is that more of the music of Mozart has not been included in the film. I am further given to understand that this apparent discrepancy or paradox is entirely characteristic of film management and outlook. I look forward some day to seeing a film on the life of Shakespeare which will not contain one single literary reference to the work of the Bard".

YOU should read his interview in the Sunday London Times of recent date. It is still better. The article is headed, "Who's Homer?" and Sir Thomas relates how he has tried for fourteen years to do something with a film company and found it utterly impossible. I will give you just one excerpt, and from this you can judge that it is a bit MOSHUGGA to have him associated with Motion Pictures.

"I found the mentality of all film people who approached me to be as singularly and exotically different from that of the rest of humanity, as some fabulous legend of antiquity. For instance some time ago wandering into a picture house, I saw a most thrilling melodrama which lasted about fifteen minutes. The scene of it, of course, was in the United States". Don't overlook the "of course". "During the brief period I saw a battle at sea, a train wreck, a fire on the 130th storey of a San Francisco skyscraper, the abduction of at least 25 young women, and a few other hardly less exciting episodes". Now do you agree with me, that Sir Thomas Beecham's introduction to Motion Pictures is MOSHUGGA? In other words it looks as if Sir Thomas is going to be a HARD PILL for the Industry to swallow.



of screen actors. Selwyn, who is visiting here, points out that Gable is invariably compelled to "carry" somebody else's performance.

Other Selwyn points: Most intelligent woman in films is Norma Shearer. Not sure himself that she'll make a good Juliet, but says if she says she will, she will. "The best screen actors are those who don't 'act'".

So much for Mr. Selwyn.

Let's turn to current pictures again by way of reference to "Dark Angel" which succeeded "Peg of Old Drury" at the Leicester Square Theatre. This Sam Goldwyn opus should be one of the year's biggest box-office hits over there. It's a story of England and English characters. It stars March, Marshall and the Oberon. Its sentiment is of the "lump-in-the-throat" species which o.k.'s it for the general. Its equally o.k. for the discerning, however. "One of the really great pictures of this or any other year", says the Daily Mail.

David Loew Appointed to Vice-Presidency, Hal Roach Inc.

Lulu in Hollywood

"STORM Over The Andes", a Universal Picture. Directed by W. Christie Gabanne. Original story by Eliot Gibbons and Laclede Christy. Cast: Jack Holt, Antonio Moreno, Mona Barrie, Gene Lockhart, Juanita Garfias, Grant Withers, Barry Norton, George Lewis and others. Place, South America. Time, present.

Bob Kent (Jack), a daredevil flyer, decides to attach himself to the "cause" in South America, which has Major Rojas (Antonio) in charge. His man Cracker (Gene Lockhart) of course going with him. His advent is not anticipated in South America with any amount of glee. Where women are concerned he is a trifle, and carries numerous rings which he leaves as a token to many of them. One of them he gives to the sweetheart of Mitchell (Grant Withers) causing no little feeling.

The war is on with another vehicle for stunt flying in full progress, in which the daredevil does some spectacular work, bombing the enemy's munitions plant.

Before action there is a fiesta during which Bob meets and falls in love with Theresa (Mona) who happens to be the wife of Major Rojas, although he does not know it. The Major takes Bob home with him for a farewell party, as they go into action immediately, and Bob finds out the truth. The misunderstanding is later cleared up by Bob saving the Major, the latter who has gone out on duty during which his plane has been destroyed by the enemy. A splendid scene later takes place in which both of them go out, get into the enemy plane, make a prisoner of the "chief" fly into their own territory — are shot at by their own men — arriving home with full honors, but with Bob seriously hurt. You are left to guess whether he lives or not. Gene Lockhart provides the laughs, and they are many and good. A splendid flying picture.

Introducing "Doc Crews"

HOLLYWOOD, whether it's North, East, South or West, still is Hollywood, and in one of these ports, viz: our own North Hollywood, we have the outstanding showman of them all, none other than Doc Crews. It there is anything new to be thought of in the business, he beats them all to it by a mile. For instance: Who would ever think of giving a preview, or personal appearance or premiere for man's best friend the DOG, but that is just what Doc had for Buck, the canine hero of "The Call of the Wild". Doc Crews has been with us less than a year, and like everybody else we take things more or less for granted — but just stop and think what the El Portal looked like 11 months ago, and then look at it to-day. It would be a credit to any city in these United States. Aside from this he has been the means of distributing more than \$2,500 in money among those present, and he also has been a large factor in helpfulness to the merchants, the P.T.A., the schools for young talent, in fact we do not see what else there is for him to think of, but you can rest assured he will always have something in the bag.

Virtue has its own reward, believe it or not, and while Old Man Depression still gets in a lick or two, Doc every now and then has to say, "Patron, go away from my door", for he is sold out. That is some achievement in these times. When conditions become normal, we will have to build an auditorium for him. Congratulations to Fox West Coast.

Gala Premiere Warner Bros. "Midsummer Night's Dream" Royal Alexandra, Toronto, October 21st

Conklin in Winnipeg

Annual Conference Famous Players Western Managers
MOTION picture producers are branching out into new fields in their search for plots suitable for the screen, although they are inclined to depend more upon successes in fiction and on the stage than upon unproven material, said J. J. Fitzgibbons of Toronto, general manager of Famous Players Canadian Corporation, who was in Winnipeg to attend the annual conference of western managers.

It was along the lines of similar conferences of Famous Players theatre managers which have been held throughout Canada during the past few weeks.

Mr. Fitzgibbons sees little change in the amusement field with motion pictures still predominating.

Research in an effort to better moving picture productions is constantly being carried on and improvements are constantly being made in sound reproduction and in the development of color film, he said.

Much attention is being given to sound reproduction in an effort to give truer tonal rendering to the voices of the actors. In the field of color, new processes are being developed that will add greatly to the beauty of moving picture productions.

Musical features are becoming more and more popular with enterprising studios, all well known operas and operettas in line for reproduction for the screen.

"Managers throughout Canada are optimistic over business conditions for the coming season, with many excellent film productions already booked and in the making," he said.

Accompanying him on his western trip were R. W. Bolstead, financial director, and Ben Geldsaler, booking director of the corporation.

Mr. Fitzgibbons, indicated that no major changes in policy will take place this year.

Asked if there is any possibility of stage shows being introduced to Famous Players theatres in Winnipeg, Mr. Fitzgibbons said that no definite plans along that line had been made, although it is possible that occasional stage shows may be brought here.

Winnipeg Welcomes Bill and Ethel Lowe

Winnipeg friends of Bill and Ethel Lowe, the "accordion twins", welcomed them back to Winnipeg recently, after a successful vaudeville tour of the British Isles. In Britain they are known as "the Canadian Gypsies", and the act they presented there was written and staged for them by the veteran showman, John T. Fiddes, moving picture house manager of Winnipeg. While in London they were the guests of three former Winnipeg musicians who are making good in the heart of the Empire's musical circles. These boys, Jackie Hunter, Arthur Straus, and Henry Morson, are succeeding in a big way. Bill Lowe brings back the news that the amusement business in England is better than for some time; new moving picture theatres are going up and everyone seems to be working.

The Ontario Motion Picture Ball

The annual ball of the Motion Picture Industry in the province of Ontario has come to be a rather notable social event.

It will be held in the Royal York Hotel, November 8th. Last year about 850 people attended, including more than 100 from outside points. Every Ontario exhibitor is invited to be present. Representatives are expected from Montreal and New York.



Show Business



John Ford to Direct "Mary of Scotland"

John Ford, famous for his direction of "The Last Patrol" and "The Informer" for RKO Radio Pictures, has been signed by that company to direct Katharine Hepburn in the screen version of Maxwell Anderson's famous play, "Mary of Scotland".

Dudley Nichols is now adapting "Mary of Scotland" for the screen. Production is not expected to start until February, as Miss Hepburn is planning a two-month vacation following the completion of her current "Sylvia Scarlett".

"Mary of Scotland", in which Helen Hayes starred on Broadway, will be a Pandro S. Berman production.

More Players in "Magnificent Obsession"

Rollo Lloyd, Harry Watson, Alice Ardell, John Sainpolis, Marion Clayton, James Flavin and Frank Mayo have been added to the cast of John M. Stahl's production of "Magnificent Obsession" for Universal. "Magnificent Obsession" with Irene Dunne, Robert Taylor, Charles Butterworth and Betty Furness in the principle roles, is now in its twelfth week and will not be completed for several weeks more. It is one of the most pretentious pictures Universal ever started and John Stahl believes it is the best story ever to come to his hand in moving pictures.

Large Numbers of Indians in "Rose-Marie" Scenes

Actual shooting of scenes for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's production of the operetta, "Rose-Marie", made in the natural splendor of Lake Tahoe, found Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddy, the co-stars, completely surrounded by Indians.

Director W. S. Van Dyke used 400 of them in the first scenes on the lofty Sierra location, where he has transported the company and set up a colorful village. Several trainloads of supplies were sent in advance and transferred to trucks for the mile-high climb.

In some of the musical scenes Van Dyke will employ more than 1,000 people, including 100 horsemen to represent Royal Canadian Mounties and about 500 Indians who will present their weird native dances. The unit is the largest assembled for a picture in recent years.

Greta Garbo Wins First Place in London Contest

Greta Garba won first place in a popularity contest conducted by the Sunday Dispatch of London. Norma Shearer came second, and then Clark Gable, all Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer stars.

Charles Laughton, who recently completed the role of the villainous Captain Bligh in "Mutiny on the Bounty", won fifth place.

Other M-G-M players who won places in the contests were Robert Montgomery, Joan Crawford and Myrna Loy.

Leslie Howard in "Petrified Forest"

Leslie Howard, arrived at the Los Angeles airport last Thursday to begin work in "Petrified Forest" in which he will star with Bette Davis at First National. He will continue to broadcast his recently inaugurated series of radio programs, from the West Coast. Others who will appear in support of the stars in "Petrified Forest" are Verree Teasdale, Dick Foran, Allen Jenkins, Charles Grapewin and Humphrey Bogart. "Petrified Forest" is an adaptation of Robert Sherwood's play of the same title in which Howard appeared on Broadway last season. Delmar Daves adapted the play for screen presentation. Archie Mayo will direct.

Walter Forde, G-B Director, New York Board

Walter Forde, G-B director, accompanied by Mrs. Forde, is now in New York. After a short stay here he will return to the G-B studios to direct the company's forthcoming production of Kipling's "Soldiers Three". Exterior scenes for the screen transcript of this famous masterpiece have already been made in India.

In the past Mr. Forde was responsible for such successes as "Rome Express" and "Chu Chin Chow". More recently he completed direction of three of the sixteen new pictures on G-B's 1935-1936 program — "Alias Bulldog Drummond", "Born For Glory", and "King of the Damned".

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Toronto Theatres

LOEWS—Manager Jules Bernstein — Clark Gable in "Call of the Wild", a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production.

TIVOLI—Manager D. Kendal — Second week for "Top Hat", RKO production with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

IMPERIAL—Manager Jack Arthur — Columbia's "She Married Her Boss", with Claudette Colbert. On the stage, "Olsen and Johnson".

UPTOWN—Manager Tom Daley — "Shipmates Forever", with Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler, Warner Bros.

SHEA'S—Manager Jerry Shea — Frances Lederer in the Fox production, "The Gay Deception", with Frances Dee and Alan Mowbray.

Dolores Costello Signed by United Artists

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